



Local Public Health Agency Staff Take Part in GPS Training

This fall, staff from eighteen Local Public Health Agencies (LPHA) received Garmin V GPS receivers as part of a joint effort between the Geographic Health Emergency Response Mapping (GHERM) program and the new Local Environmental Public Health Initiative. Training was provided by the DHSS GIS staff.

During the one-day training, participants began with classroom training on the operation of the Garmin V receiver and the associated software. The afternoon training allowed the class to use what they had learned in the morning session. The training took the attendees to the Missouri Department of Conservation's Runge Nature Center in Jefferson City, where environmental-related field exercises were completed. With the DHSS Mobile Command Center serving as a base of operation, participants used waypoints to locate existing water sample sites, collected points of interest along a trail, used data from the GPS receiver to create spatial layers, and learned how to track back to their original destination. The training was well received, and more GPS training is planned for next spring.



The Local GIS program was initially developed through emergency response and terrorism efforts. LPHA staff have received GIS software, GPS units, and training. Local GIS users participate in GIS field and desktop exercises designed exclusively for health emergencies. The Local Environmental Public Health Initiative will enhance the current Local GIS program by creating environmental-related training courses and exercises, making environmental-themed GIS layers available for use, and undertaking a survey to determine both locally available data sources and future data collection efforts.